

**Minutes of Yarnscombe Annual Parish Meeting, Annual Parish Council Meeting and
Parish Council Meeting
Wednesday 22 May 2024**

Present: Cllr. Brice, Cooke, Jeffrey, Pengilly, Cllr. Elliott (Torrige District Council / TDC), one representative of Village Hall Committee and M. Dymond (Clerk)

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

24.41 Chair's Annual Report

Chair read out following report:

Yarnscombe Parish Council Chairman's Report for the Year 2023/24

(This report can also be found on [this web page](#) and in July's "Eagle".)

This has been a fortunate year, as we have witnessed no events dramatically affecting our parish. The main good point was the celebration on 6th May 2023, being the coronation of Charles III, for which a party was held at Victory Hall. This was well attended, with a good time had by all. A big "thank you" goes to the organisers of this celebration.

Financially, the parish council has remained within budget and was able through good management to hold the precept for 2024/25 at 0%.

With regards to works over the year, we have managed to replace the fencing on the lower and right sides of the playing field. The cost of this was materials only, as all labour was supplied by volunteers, led by Cllrs. Denys Cooke and Dan Farr.

In addition, we have also ordered the materials to replace the upper fence of the playing field. This will be a galvanized park fence with an expected life of 15 years, work commencing in the next few months (weather dependent).

Potholes remain an emotive subject, a case of God versus Devon Highways — bets on who is winning? To assist in this and to help parishioners we have now paid for and placed a permanent advertisement in the Eagle on how to contact Devon Highways on this issue, if it affects you. Please be aware parish councils have little to no impact on this matter, it is up to the individual to report issues.

Following the resignation of Cllr. Paul Williams last year, a vacancy on the council arose. This has now been filled, with Richard Ellison volunteering and being co-opted onto the council. He is a retired solicitor who has served on other councils in the past.

Christopher Brice (Chair, Yarnscombe PC)

24.42 Any matters arising

None

ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

24.43 Signing of Acceptance of Office Forms

Forms were emailed to councillors and will be countersigned by clerk on receipt.

24.44 Election and Acceptance of Office of Chairman

Cllr. Cooke proposed, Cllr. Jeffery seconded. All agreed. Cllr. Brice accepted Office of Chairman and was duly elected.

24.45 Election and Acceptance of Office of Vice-Chairman

Cllr. Brice proposed, Cllr. Jeffery seconded. All agreed. Cllr. Newberry accepted Office of vice-chair (via email) and was duly elected.

24.46 Apologies, Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Apologies had been received and accepted from Cllrs. Farr, Ellison, Saywell (Devon County Council / DCC), Lock (Torrige District Council / TDC) and PCSO Brown. There were no declarations of interest and no requests for dispensations had been received.

24.47 Minutes of the last Annual Parish Council Meeting, 24 May 2023

Minutes had been approved and signed off as a true record on meeting of 28 June 2023.

24.48 Review of the Council's Fundamental Documents

Standing Orders, Financial Regulations (including Separation of Duties) and Internal Control documents

Actions taken: New NALC update will be applied and Cllr. Pengilley will report back at next meeting.

24.49 Receipt of a statement of the council's account for the period ending the previous 31 March

Following advice given by auditor in her report of the previous year, the council set up two savings accounts, instant access with the sum of £5,000 and 32 days notice account with the sum of £10,000. On 31 March 2024 the "Instant Access" account held £5,027.48 and the "32 Days Notice" account held £10,116.78. The Treasurer's Account stood at £10,394.13. Combined, these accounts came to the sum of £25,538.39. Compared with last year's balance on 31 March 2023 of £22,389.41, the council's financial situation has remained stable and enabled it to focus on the project of installing a metal fence in the playing field. Council stayed broadly within budget.

24.50 Election of Representatives

Cllr. Pengilley agreed to carry on as representative for the church, Cllr. Cooke agreed to act as a representative for the playing field, Cllr. Newberry will be representative for Village Hall / Social Club and the clerk agreed to act as representative for Youth Club (should it become active).

24.51 Review of Asset List

No change. Once new fence is installed, its cost will be added to the value of the playing field.

24.52 Review and confirmation of insurance cover in respect of all insured risks

The 5 year contract with Community First will run out on 31 May 2023. Clerk had circulated new quote which offered the option of a 3 year contract at cost of £415.03.

Actions taken: Cheque to be written out and countersigned. Clerk to send off.

24.53 Review of Subscriptions

Yearly subscriptions include payments to DALC, ICO, Parish Online and Domainsrush. Councillors confirmed these subscriptions.

24.54 Review of Complaints Procedure and Grievance and Discipline Procedures

No update needed.

24.55 Review of Data Protection Policy

No update needed.

24.56 Review of remaining policies and documents

- i. Press and Media Communications — no update needed
- ii. Action Plan — currently under review
Actions taken: Cllr. Pengilley to report back once review complete
- iii. Emergency Plan / Emergency Plan Data Regulations — to be updated
Actions taken: Cllr. Pengilley to report back once update complete
- iv. Grant Awarding Policy — no update needed
- v. Training Policy and Record — no update needed
- vi. Risk Management — no update needed

- vii. Equality Policy — no update needed
- viii. Health And Safety Policy — no update needed
- ix. Parish Council Information — has been updated
- x. Playing Field Conditions of Hire — reviewed, no change necessary
- xi. Staff Appraisal Process — staff appraisal within next few months

24.57 Date, time and place of ordinary parish council meetings

These were confirmed as the fourth Wednesday of every month, 7.30pm at the village hall.

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

24.58 Apologies, Declarations of Interest and requests for dispensations

See 24.46

24.59 Public Participation and Feedback

None

24.60 Representatives Reports

1) County/District Councillors

County

Cllr. Saywell sent the following report by email

My apologies I cannot be with you this evening due to attending Great Torrington Town Council's annual meeting.

Overview — It has been a busy year at Devon County Council and a year of change and modernisation. Donna Manson, our new Chief Executive, has settled in well and is making a noticeable impact. A restructure of the County Council is underway with the intention of streamlining Departments and ensuring there is greater cross-departmental working and less of a siloed structures.

Reviewing and modernising services has been the priority for this year and the next. This is not about cutting services but changing them so they can be delivered differently and more effectively. A huge amount of work has been put in this year to ensure the long term financial sustainability of the Council and I am pleased to report this work is progressing well.

Financial Situation — The outturn figures have now been finalised and I can confirm that DCC came in with an underspend for the 2023–24 financial year. I cannot stress enough what an achievement this is given the wider challenges the Council has faced in the past 2 years, and this puts the Council on a firm footing for this new financial year. Compared with the neighbouring and wider local government family, Devon's finances are in a far more secure position. Through this careful budget management, this has freed up additional resources for Highways which I will highlight in a moment . . .

Devolution — Away from the modernisation and finances, the other major development this year has been the Devolution Deal for Devon and Torbay.. The consultation has now closed and DCC and Torbay Councils have voted to approve the settlement. While this won't for most people change things overnight, it is the start of a journey for Devon and puts us in a much stronger position to engage with Central Government, draw down more funding for economic and affordable housing regeneration schemes, and over time see a greater transfer of powers away from Westminster and down to Devon.

The immediate settlement includes:

1. Direct control of adult education to create up to 50,000 new training and retraining opportunities by 2030
2. Government transfer of over £16 million to invest in new green jobs, homes, skills, and business growth, and accelerate Devon and Torbay's transition to a net-zero economy
3. Stronger partnership with Homes England to create a joint local action plan for affordable housing schemes for local people and reduce homelessness

4. Even closer working between Devon and Torbay to improve the efficiency and co-ordination of public transport. There is an ambition to introduce a single ticketing system for travellers and investment in services to provide greater access to public transport
5. Devon and Torbay would be responsible for developing, designing and delivering the next stages of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund from 2025
6. Boosting and supporting high growth business sectors in Devon and Torbay, such as advanced marine engineering, defence, photonics and digital

There have been some fears expressed during the consultation that the new Devon and Torbay County Combined Authority will be too remote and focus funding on south Devon only at the expense of the north of the County and we will be 'overlooked' . . .

I do not agree with that assessment and would point out that, with the recent exception of Levelling Up Funding, both Torridge DC and Devon CC on their own have been regularly overlooked for the past 50 years! Carrying on with the status quo won't change that but I believe the Devolution Settlement will re-set our relationship with Government and the poor economic and social indicators in Torridge will mean this area is a priority within Devon. And to give a tangible example, I happen to believe if we'd had this set up in previous years then it would not have taken over 30 years to demolish the old Creamery site at Taddiport. Funding for a regeneration scheme could have been drawn down much sooner, and in a way that our existing local government organisations on their own simply haven't been able to do.

Above all, in time I believe we will see more powers devolved down to Devon, away from central government bureaucrats in London, and without the need for having an 'elected Mayor' imposed on us. It is the start of a journey and an exciting opportunity for Devon and for Torrington Rural.

New Leader — As I reported to the last meeting, Cllr James McInnes, County Councillor for Hatherleigh and Chagford, will be the new Leader of the County Council. Andrea Davis, County Councillor for Combe Martin Rural and Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment, will be the new Deputy Leader.

Further Highways Funding — I am working with the Neighbourhood Highways Officer to identify further sites in Torrington Rural for serviceability patching, and dragon patching and elastomac sites — any suggestions for Yarnscombe will be gratefully received!

If there are any local matters residents or the Parish Council would like me to look into then you know where I am, please do get in touch and I will follow them up for you.

District

Cllr. Elliott explained that the area from Northam Burrows to RHS Rosemoor in Torrington, including Bideford harbour, has been awarded heritage status.

TDC have taken back ground maintenance, as part of this scheme plantings will consist of mainly perennial plants in town and shrubs in rural areas. Complaints regarding this issue have gone down, the budget set for this scheme is not a statutory requirement.

The council also purchased a shredder, enabling them to compost waste plant material.

Regarding "Planning", TDC dealt with 97 Enforcement cases. There are on average 100 cases per officer, appeals have fallen by 100% in TDC's favour.

2) Village Hall / Social Club — A member of Village Hall Committee attended meeting. She informed councillors that work on path lights had started and council will be updated about progress.

3) Youth Club — Clerk had included need for parent volunteers in last edition of "Eagle" and will do so again in next issue.

4) PCSO / Police Report

No crimes reported, no incident logs created.

5) Playing field

Draft Agreement between Cllr. Ellison and Yarnscombe PC

Draft agreement had been drawn up, but needs further checks. For instance, would council insurance cover risks/responsibilities as outlined in the agreement?

Actions taken: Final checks of agreement to be put on next agenda.

24.61 Minutes of Meeting from 24 April 2024

Minutes were signed off and approved by Cllr. Pengilly as Cllr. Newberry, who had chaired the April meeting, was unable to attend tonight's meeting.

24.62 Matters arising from last Minutes

24.63 New Matters

Internal Audit Report — Council had passed Internal Audit, relevant documents associated with the audit will be published on [this page](#).

Actions taken: Clerk to forward relevant documents to Cllr. Pengilly.

Reimbursement to Clerk: four 1st Class stamps £5.40 — see 24.67

24.64 PROW — Monthly Report

Works are ongoing

24.65 Planning

[1/0449/2024/AGMB](#), Prior notification for the change of use of agricultural building to one dwelling house and associated building, operations under Class Q (Barn 1), Agricultural Building At Grid Reference 255154 122068, Yarnscombe, Devon — Councillors had no comments to forward

[1/0450/2024/AGMB](#), Prior notification for the change of use of agricultural building to one dwelling house and associated building, operations under Class Q (Barn 2) Agricultural Building At Grid Reference 255162 122048, Yarnscombe, Devon — Councillors had no comments to forward

24.66 Additional Planning

Proposed extensions to dwelling, 6 St Andrew's Close, Yarnscombe, Barnstaple, Devon, EX31 3LB

Ref. No: [1/0392/2024/FUL](#) — Received: Fri 26 Apr 2024 — Validated: Fri 26 Apr 2024

24.67 Accounts

Reimbursement to clerk four 1st class stamps £5.40 — to be put on next agenda

Meeting closed at 8.30pm.

9th June 2024